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ABSTRACT

The County College of Morris (CCM), in Randolph, New Jersey, was established in 1968-69, and over 20,000 students have received degrees or certificates from the college since its founding. In an effort to improve alumni involvement, a new alumni program was established under the Division of College Advancement, and a part-time Alumni Director was hired. To promote involvement in the new Alumni Association, CCM implemented a plan to feature alumni as "community stars," placing them in public fundraising efforts. An institutional-image marketing campaign was also developed, and five key alumni were chosen to be featured spokespersons for the college in all advertising for a given period. The alumni, who held prestigious positions in their companies, appeared in advertising media including billboards, newspapers, magazines, cable television, and radio spots. In the first alumni drive, over $10,000 were raised and subsequent alumni personalities were featured annually. Based upon this success, a second phase of the program was implemented, in which the alumni "stars" were enlisted to start CCM Corporate Alumni Clubs (CAC) at various companies in the area. Club activities included bringing college programming events to the company for on-site activities (luncheon speakers, jazz ensemble performances, etc.) and mobilizing alumni at the organizations to make corporate gifts matched by the company. As part of the CAC efforts, one company has donated over $100,000 in new computer equipment to the college, and other companies have provided scholarship and outreach support. (PAA)

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALUMNI:

PARTNERS IN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Presented at the Junior and Community College Institute's
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COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALUMNI: PARTNERS IN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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The County College of Morris Alumni Program grew out of our institutional strategic plan and our plan to establish a Foundation. Cultivation and mobilization of the alumni were our original objectives, so a comprehensive plan involving marketing, strategic planning, and resource development emerged to formulate the basis for our alumni development activities.

Our Institutional Strategic Plan (1989- 1993) called for: Resource Development through our newly established Foundation, increased enrollment through marketing strategies, image enhancement, and the creation of more intensive corporate partnerships.

The County College of Morris defines Alumni as those students awarded degrees or certificates from the institution. The College, established in 1968-69, has approximately 10,000 students headcount and over 20,000 alumni.

The college had an historically weak alumni effort which was under student activities. In 1987-88, the alumni effort was reorganized under the Division of College Advancement and Planning. Subsequently, a part-time Alumni Director (25 hrs. week) was hired.

The philosophy of the new Alumni Program was to be the basis of the new marketing effort, an important part of

resource development (fundraising), and to improve public relations and the image of the College in the community.

The plan was to create a "Visceral Alumni Association." Given the time constraints of most people and the unwillingness to commit to membership in new organizations, we wanted to create a sense of belonging to something of importance and value through a sense of affiliation and association.

Our strategic action plan called for us to:

1. Create Alumni as "community stars"
2. Enlist their loyalty.
3. Feature them publicly.
4. Use them in fundraising.

We wanted to give greater pride to current students in the college, develop a prelude to fundraising efforts, develop long term commitments, **develop alumni networks as entrees to corporations,** and move from warm and fuzzy programming to programming that would have an "impact."

In order to accomplish these goals, we decided to develop an institutional image marketing campaign focusing on alumni. Five Key alumni would be featured (making them stars) as selected spokespersons for the college. These alumni would be featured in all advertising for the selected period. The media included:

1. Billboards
2. Newspapers
3. Magazines
4. Cable TV Ads (30 second spots)
5. Radio spots
6. All other media.

The campaign tag line became **"I STARTED RIGHT."** Their stories appeared in the local media, ads were done using their own voices, TV spots showed them posing for Billboard photos etc. These were real live "guys and gals next door" who held prestigious positions in their companies. We were able to place African American Alumni billboards in neighborhoods that were predominantly Black, Hispanic alumni billboards in Latino Neighborhoods, etc. The highways in the area proclaimed our blitz as did the local media. Buttons and T-shirts with "I Started Right, CCM Alumnus" were given at special events etc. This slogan became a watchword in our community among politicians, future and current students, and alumni.

We used these alumni stars as spokespersons for the college. This activity led up to the first alumni annual fund drive. Using our media personalities as kick off campaign leaders, we raised over $10,000 in the first ever alumni drive.

Subsequent personalities were featured annually, and the

media looked forward to the "Naming of CCM Spokespersons" for the year. This activity usually generated a feature article in local papers.

Based upon this success, we then implemented the second phase of the program. These newly crowned stars were soon to become the basis for our partnership Development Program with local corporations. We enlisted them to start **CCM Corporate Alumni Clubs** at various major companies in the area and to become lead persons in establishing partnerships with the key funding sources within the companies. The Alumni Clubs of course were started at corporations where one of our "stars" worked.

The Corporate Alumni Clubs are designed to meet the following goals:

1. Enlist support for the college by bringing programming from the college to the company for on-site activities. (Luncheon speakers, jazz ensemble etc.)
2. Fundraising: To mobilize the alumni in the company to make a corporate gift matched entirely by the corporation for the alumni annual fund drive.
3. Create a sense of belonging and identity among our alumni employees. Encourage them to take additional coursework.

Research was performed on our alumni in corporations through the development of an Alumni Directory. Using the professional services of the Harris Publishing Company, we issued an alumni directory and used the Composite Donor Index provided by Harris. The identification of Alumni at local corporations was made possible through the data obtained from the directory responses. Clubs were subsequently started at:

Warner Lambert Corp. (100 alumni)
Allied Signal (90 alumni)
Nabisco (100 alumni)
Morristown Memorial Hospital (100+ alumni)

Several more clubs are in the beginning stages of development. However, using our alumni as corporate contacts, successful partnerships have resulted from these alumni corporate contacts and include:

A major program with **Hewlett Packard** involving the donation of over $100,000 of new computer equipment to equip a CAD Lab for severely disabled students. This program resulted from the combined efforts of a dedicated faculty member and a Hewlett Packard Alumni Engineer. We have received national publicity for this program as well as developing the program into an award winning public relations effort.

Another Alumnus was instrumental in obtaining funding from **UPS** to finance a professional Job Developer position for the College's CO-OP program as well as to provide scholarship support to the College. In turn, the college agreed to work with UPS on the schedules of the many CCM students they employ in part-time jobs. This alumnus was also named as our colleges outstanding alumnus for the 1991 year.

Allied Signal's support to the College's Center for Teaching Excellence to operate a Science Outreach program designed to improve the teaching of science in grades K-12 was the direct

result of an alumnus who carried our proposal through the corporate bureaucracy.

These three programs are on-going corporate commitments and represent significant annual dollars to fund the efforts. To date, our program has been successful to a point. We have succeeded in creating the base for an outstanding alumni effort. Problems remain with increased staffing, and budget. The Director remains part-time with little clerical support and limited operating funds. The alumni annual fund has grown to the point where a phon-a-thon will be annualized as well as a two tier mail appeal. Increased activity and increased numbers of donors demand attention and management. We must plan carefully to manage this growth in the future.

Our ad campaign has generated what we had hoped it would. We have increased our visibility, enhanced our image, and given institutional pride to current students. The ad campaign generated over 100 letters from alumni, parents, and friends identifying new and future media stars.